



Success, Achievement, Together ... for All Students

October 23, 2017

Chairman Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW,
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

This letter serves as our response to the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Public Notice DA 17-921 Seeking Comment on Category 2 Budgets, specifically in regards to Category 2 equipment funding. We believe that the e-Rate program is, and should continue to be a critical resource to Schools and Libraries across the country. It enabled many districts in our region to obtain upgrades to our individual and collective network infrastructures, many of which were years beyond their expected lifecycle.

Willamette Valley e-Rate applicants have obtained \$5,867,560.78 (and counting) in Category 2 funding since its inception in 2015. This funding has been crucial in allowing our schools to create a robust and equitable learning environment. Teachers have access to digital learning tools and are empowered to create engaging and interactive curricula that can be delivered almost anywhere in our region.

The Category 2 budget formula has proven to be one of the most successful and well implemented changes to emerge from the e-Rate Modernization Order of 2014. We expect to utilize all available funding in this first 5 year cycle. However, the need for updated hardware and wiring will not end in 2020, and neither should the Category 2 budget formula. Many schools in our region and beyond still have need of updated equipment, and changes in Internet security and the bandwidth availability being facilitated by Special Construction funding will no doubt require our network infrastructure to be more closely monitored and refreshed in order to keep up.

We urge the Commission to continue the Category 2 funding formula through 2025 and beyond. The FCC has taken a funding source that had become almost unattainable by most districts, and turned it into one of the most reliable and beneficial aspects of the program. Please, let's continue to build off of this momentum and enable Schools and Libraries to create strong, reliable networks to best serve our students and patrons.

Sincerely,

Dave Novotney, Ph.D.
Superintendent